

# **New Internationalist**

The people, the ideas, the action in the fight for global justice

## **RICH OR POOR - WHICH IS BETTER?**

New Internationalist Easier English  
Intermediate Ready Lesson

# Today's lesson:

- a) Speaking
- b) Vocabulary
- c) Reading 1
- d) Grammar
- e) Vocabulary and Reading 2
- f) Writing

## Speaking

**Rich or poor?:** which  
are kinder / safer /  
happier / nicer /  
more friendly / more  
helpful / more polite?  
And why?

# Vocabulary – what do these words mean?

research

emotion

compassion

ethical

road junction

selfish

brain

# Reading 1

Who are nicer, the rich or the poor? – **skim for 2 mins** to find what the research shows

[http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/The\\_rich\\_in\\_India](http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/The_rich_in_India) (or shortened version on following 2 slides)

## Eating the children's sweets

Recently, scientists in the US have been studying how money affects personality and behaviour. The results are always the same. The rich are different – and not in a good way. Their life experience makes them understand others less and care about others less. They are generally more selfish, according to Dacher Keltner, Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Berkeley. 'We have done 12 studies measuring in many different ways how people understand the feelings of others ... and it's always the same result...

For example, poorer people are better at understanding the emotions of people in photos than rich people. In videos of conversations, the rich look at their phones more often, draw pictures and do not make eye contact; poorer people make eye contact and nod their heads more often, which shows that they are interested.

In another test, when poorer people could give away points (which represented money), they gave away more points than richer people.

Keltner also studied the vagus nerve. This nerve helps the brain with emotions. When people are shown pictures of starving children, for example, their vagus nerve becomes more active. Keltner has found that this nerve is more active in poorer people.

One of his students, Jennifer Stellar, did a similar experiment using heart rate. The heart becomes slower when people feel compassion. The heart rates of the richest students did not change when they looked at pictures of children with cancer, but the heart rates of poorer students did change. 'The rich cannot understand,' Stellar told the New York Magazine.

In 2012 another researcher from the University of California, Paul Piff, published 'Higher Social Class makes people less ethical'. Using quizzes, online games, questionnaires and other research, Piff also found that richer people are less ethical, more selfish, more insular and have less compassion.

One experiment put people in a room with a bowl of sweets for children. The rich people, were the most likely to take the sweets. Another experiment showed that rich people were three times more likely to cheat than poorer people.

In another study, Piff and his researchers spent three months observing drivers at a busy road junction. They gave cars a grade, from one to five, with five the most expensive. They found that drivers of grade-five cars were the most likely to drive badly, driving out in front of others. Piff then did an experiment to test how drivers think about people crossing roads. A researcher walked onto a zebra crossing as a car came along. Half of the grade-five car drivers didn't stop. 'It's like they didn't even see the people crossing,' said Piff.

Can the rich save themselves? We need more studies to show what happens if they give away their money.

In the US, the research shows that richer people learn how to take. So, for example, the richer person is more likely to take a child's sweets than a poorer person. If we talk about money, not sweets, we see this a lot in India. Often, money for development programmes for the poor, is taken by the rich. Land that belongs to the poor is taken to build factories (the Nano plant, for example) without paying any compensation.

Why do people who have so much want more? Why do they act so badly to other people, and why do people accept what they do as 'natural'? Maybe, soon, people in developing countries will start to look for answers to these questions.

# Reading – now read to find out if these statements are true or false

True -T or False - F

In the research:

- 1/ Rich people understood people's emotions better than poor people.
- 2/ Poor people were more generous than rich people.
- 3/ Rich people felt more compassion than poor people.
- 4/ Rich people took children's sweets.
- 5/ Poor people were better drivers than rich people.
- 6/ Poor people were more selfish than rich people.



# Key:

1. F

2. T

3. F

4. T

5. T

6. F

# Speaking

What can we do about this?

In pairs, make suggestions

eg. **We could make** rich people go on courses to understand others.

**We ought to** only **allow** poor people to run the country.

**Why don't we teach** rich people to drive better?

# Grammar: suggestions:

We                      should  
                                 + infinitive  
                         ought to

Why don't we           + infinitive?

In pairs, write 5 sentences from your group's suggestions

# Vocabulary – what do these words mean?

gang                      vandalism

climate crime

bonus

carbon                      justice

electronic tag

# Reading 2

[http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/The rich -  
how can we help them%3F](http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/The_rich_-_how_can_we_help_them%3F)

- a) 1 minute – see if you can find any of your suggestions
- b) 3 minutes – together, match the 5 pictures (on other ppt) with 5 of the points
- c) 5 minutes – in pairs, put the 10 ideas in order of importance

# The rich - how can we help them?

*A 10-point plan for people who make important decisions, with pictures by Kate Charlesworth.*

## **1. Gangs**

Stop the terrible, criminal gangs. Arrest the leaders of the gangs and put them in prison.

## **2. Being parents**

Give classes about how to be a parent. Teach social values and respect. Then they can teach these to their children.

## **3. Housing**

Make them move out of the very expensive centres of the world's capital cities. If they own houses but do not use them often, make the building public, or give it to poor people who need places to live.

## **4. Crime and what happens after crime**

Be very tough on people who repeat crime against climate. Take away their luxury cars and private planes. Make them learn from these crimes by teaching them how to walk and to use public transport.

## **5. Employment**

Stop rich people earning money from not doing anything (getting profit from money they didn't even earn. Make them work instead. Stop them depending on trust funds. They don't deserve to earn so much money. Make them do work experience.

## **6. Bad behaviour**

Punish the people who take risks with money: people who bet money, cheat people and lie. They cannot expect the public to help them with money when they lose it. Punish them by making them stay at home, put electronic tags on them to track where they go, and stop them using the internet to ruin the economy of the world.

## **7. Having too many children**

Stop these problem families having children. They use far too much carbon and have irresponsible lifestyles.

## **8. Vandalism**

Make them clean up everything they destroy.

## **9. Responsibility in society**

Teach them to start paying what they need to pay. Lesson No 1: Pay your tax.

## **10. Justice - pay back the money**

Make the bankers who took bonus payments pay these back. They were paid too much money anyway. And the banks and businesses they took bonuses from were helped with public money, so they need to face the public and pay the money back.





# Writing

**Make a poster to tell people about the research, your suggestions and the suggestions in the second text.**

Homework:

The texts are from: Easier English Wiki New Internationalist – read more easier English here:

[http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/Main_Page)